

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Your Child Protective Services (CPS) worker is:

CPS Worker phone number and email:

The Supervisor is:

Supervisor phone number and email:

Your foster care worker is:

Foster care worker phone number and email:

COURT

It is important for parents to attend court hearings and to arrive early to allow time to speak with your attorney and/or caseworker.

Your CPS caseworker can provide you with details about the hearing, including the date and time.

More information about the role of the court, hearings, and people you will meet can be found at <https://mdcourts.gov/legalhelp/childabuseneglect>.

This 3 part series is for parents whose children have been removed from the family home. These videos offer a guide to the court process in child welfare cases, including the court hearings likely to take place and the people involved in these cases.



www.dhs.maryland.gov

Things to know if your child is in Foster Care



*A Moment in Time
Does Not Define a Family*





Children in Foster Care

Foster Care is intended to be a temporary service for you and your child until you can be reunited as a family.

Foster Care is not a substitute for parents. Your child(ren) may be placed with Resource Parents, sometimes referred to as Foster Parents. Resource parents have completed an extensive training and home study approval process to care for children and support parents.

Resource Parents are here to support your child and you during this temporary separation and to share in the co-parenting responsibilities with you.



Comfort Call

A Comfort Call is a phone call you will receive from the caseworker and resource parent. In most cases, the Comfort Call will occur on the day your child enters foster care, but if this cannot happen, one will be scheduled as soon as possible. The purpose of a Comfort Call is for you to have an opportunity to speak with the resource parent to share important information about your child. This will allow the resource parent to provide your child with the best care possible. You should tell the resource parent if your child has any allergies or takes medication. You can also discuss your child's routines, favorite food, etc. You are the expert on your child and should share what you think is important for the resource parent to know about your child. You may also have an opportunity to speak with your child, when age and developmentally appropriate.

Icebreaker Meeting

An Icebreaker is a face-to-face meeting that is scheduled by the Department of Social Services within 5 business days of your child entering foster care or moving to another placement. Icebreakers are facilitated by the caseworker and provide an opportunity for you to meet the resource parent, share information, and discuss the needs of your child. Your child may also attend the Icebreaker, when age and developmentally appropriate. Icebreakers provide an opportunity to continue to build a co-parenting relationship between you and the resource parent until your child can be reunified with you. You are encouraged to bring personal items for your child such as pictures, toys, a special blanket or stuffed animal, clothes, or other special items. It is important to arrive on time and feel comfortable sharing important information about your child's routine, health needs, education needs and likes and dislikes.



Family Time

Family time is critical to maintaining your relationship with your child. Your case worker will discuss family time and make arrangements for you and your child to see each other. Family time will also be discussed in the Icebreaker meeting. Family time includes face-to-face time together as well as other forms of communication and activities. Some other examples may include phone calls, attending medical appointments, school meetings, and extracurricular activities. There may be virtual time, communication via text, and sharing of pictures. Family time is strongly recommended and the resource parent caring for your child will help with family time. You and the resource parent will be co-parenting your child. The resource parent is here to support as much family time as possible. The court will make decisions about the type and frequency of family time that is permitted throughout the process.

